Today's News - Monday, July 9, 2012

EDITOR'S NOTE: We're back in our own time zone with lots of catching up to do (and just a bit slow getting our sea - 'er - newsletter legs back), but it's good to be home...

- ArcSpace brings us luscious eyefuls of a sculpture museum by Ito on a small island in Japan, Holl in Seoul, and the "Show Me Your Model" show at the Danish Architecture Centre.
- Kimmelman finds "pockets of hope" and "oases of civility and pride" in Bogotá.
- Piano's Shard (sort of) opened in London last week, and the pundits weigh in:
- Heathcote queries the architect on the first in a new generation of towers with "glib" nicknames: "The idea was always that the building should not be a symbol of arrogance but a sparkling spire, flirting with the weather," says Piano. "Extraordinarily, he has almost managed it," says EH.
- Russell gives it a thumbs-up (with caveats): the Shard "needs neighboring towers so that it doesn't look like a shiny weed sprouting from" the bank of the Thames...but its best moments point the way to tall building design that can gracefully coexist with the city's invaluable history."
- Rose calls the Shard the "the most divisive building in living memory": critics say it is most certainly not for the "common man"; defenders say it is preferable to urban sprawl.
- Baillieu says it's "morally suspect, compromised, and a bit nutty - and in the wrong place - but it's brave and for that reason we can forgive it a lot."
- Walljasper cheers Southwest Detroit's "following a different playbook for revitalization": "Jane Jacobs would love it."
- Dickinson dallies over P+W and Foster buildings going up in New Haven that "epitomize higher education's noble intents," but "offer starkly different visions to their users and neighbors."
- Farago looks at what's behind the battle over the New York Public Library's plans to "'replace books with people', but do we have to turn our beaux-arts research library into a giant internet cafe?"
- Hume has high hopes Toronto will take heed of an architect's upcoming report suggesting ways to improve the public realm in a "city of islands made unapproachable by traffic."
- Davidson is delighted by NYC's Governors Island: it's "a deliciously mellow design" for "the way people actually behave rather than the way architects think they ought to."
- Minneapolis's Peavey Plaza demolition debate turns into legal battle.
- From opposite sides of the Big Pond, Brussat cheers the "thoughtful classicism" of London's Bomber Command Memorial, and Mills takes on the Eisenhower Memorial: "what is a fitting tribute to Ike?"
- Rochon is sweet on the buzz surrounding "an iconic new hexagonal tower for the important work that honey bees do."
- ASLA announces an impressive lineup of 2012 Honorees.

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-- Toyo Ito & Associates: Ken Iwata Mother and Child Museum, Imabari City, Japan
-- Exhibition: "Show Me Your Model" - Danish Architecture Centre/DAC, Copenhagen, Denmark
-- Steven Holl Architects: Daeyang Gallery and House, Seoul, Korea

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Past Its Golden Moment, Bogotá Clings to Hope: ...the Colombian capital relies on recent architectural innovations in libraries and schools as oases of civility and pride...I found pockets of hope...a reminder that the economic and social lives of neighborhoods and whole cities rise and fall depending on access to public transit, public parks, public spaces. By Michael Kimmelman -- Lorenzo Castro; Daniel Bermudez Samper; Giancarlo Mazzanti [slide shows]- New York Times

Kaleidoscopic answer to big question: Like its creator, the Shard is tall, lean, elegantly clad, greying a little at the top and very well connected...symptomatic of London's problem with big towers...more Dubai than Manhattan...the first, and by far the biggest, in a new generation of towers...That each of these has garnered a glib nickname shows how hard architects are working to create the kind of ready-made logo towers demanded by clients who want their structures to stand out. By Edwin Heathcote -- Renzo Piano; Rogers Stirk Harbour; KPF; Rafael Viñoly- Financial Times (UK)

Renzo Piano's Shard Points Finger at London Neighbors: The trouble with the European Union's tallest skyscraper is that it's too short to soar...needs neighboring towers so that it doesn't look like a shiny weed sprouting from the south bank of the River Thames...isn't good enough to quiet the tower haters, but its best moments point the way to tall building design that can gracefully coexist with the city's invaluable history. By James S. Russell -- Renzo Piano- Bloomberg News

London's Shard opens to fanfare, but not for the common man: ...its luxury hotel and £30m apartments show how exclusive it is...the most divisive building in living memory...opponents are not particularly incensed by the design. The real issues are size, location and ownership...defenders point out that inner-city density is preferable to urban sprawl... By Steven Rose -- Renzo Piano- Guardian (UK)

Shard of class? It's the British way: ...epitomises compromise and contradiction...No one broke the law...but the law was bent...First was the role played by the celebrity architect. There's nothing wrong in this. Better Renzo Piano than...[It] is not the great symbol of towering ambition some have claimed. It's morally suspect, compromised, and a bit nutty — and in the wrong place — but it's brave and for that reason we can forgive it a lot. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

Southwest Detroit: Jane Jacobs would love it: While downtown and Midtown fit the usual pattern of urban progress – established institutions and developers guiding most of the changes - other parts of town are following a different playbook for revitalization. By Jay Walljasper [links]- Citiwire

Similar buildings, big divide in design: ...offer starkly different visions to their users and neighbors. Both...epitomize higher education's noble intents...Gateway Community College [and] Yale School of Management's Edward P. Evans building...these fraternal twins evidence the extreme diversity architecture can offer up. We can only hope their distinctions complement their intentions. By Duo Dickinson -- Perkins+Will; Foster + Partners- New Haven Register (Connecticut)

What lies behind the battle over the New York Public Library: The NYPL wants to 'replace books with people', but do we have to turn our beaux-arts research library into a giant internet cafe? ...the debate is getting bitter...we are being told that what we really deserve is not a world-class library, but comfy chairs and blueberry muffins. By Jason Farago -- Carrère and Hastings; Norman Foster/Foster + Partners [links]- Guardian (UK)

Architect says inviting city spaces made unapproachable by traffic: Toronto, says Ewa Westermark, is a city of islands. Her job is to reconnect them...here to study a handful of sites with an eye to improving them. Specifically, that means making them more accessible to cyclists and pedestrians and enhancing the public realm. By Christopher Hume -- Gil Penalosa/8-80 Cities; Jan Gehl Architects- Toronto Star

Justin Davidson on the Redesigned Governors Island: How the park's planners learned what worked...spent years observing the summertime crowds...plowed that knowledge into a design that's ambitious and spectacular, but also freewheeling and improvisational...a deliciously mellow design. -- Adriaan Geuze/West 8 [images]- New York Magazine

Peavey Plaza demolition debate turns into legal battle: The controversy over the city of Minneapolis' plan to demolish...27-year-old park plaza designed by landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg, could end up being resolved in a court room. -- Preservation Alliance of Minnesota; Charles Birnbaum/The Cultural Landscape Foundation- City Pages (Minneapolis/St. Paul)

Rethinking the Eisenhower Memorial: what is a fitting tribute to Ike? The Frank Gehry design has proved controversial, but the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials suggest an honourable solution...By comparison with the bitter battle over the new Memorial to the airmen of Bomber Command...the battle...has been mild...The architectural fight...is, nonetheless, one of enormous seriousness. By Nicolaus Mills- Guardian (UK)

Bomber Command Memorial on target: ...honors their courage with a thoughtful classicism that needs no interpretation to be understood...When architects use architecture to articulate nuance, they end up articulating nothing. In short, they end up with Frank Gehry's proposed memorial to Eisenhower. By David Brussat -- Liam O'Connor [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Building sweet buzz in an urban wasteland: A stainless-steel magnate and 10 visionary architecture students have cross-pollinated their imaginations to create a honey of an idea in Upstate New York...an iconic new hexagonal tower for the important work that honey bees do...a beacon of urban regeneration. By Lisa Rochon -- University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning; Rigidized Metals [image]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

ASLA Announces 2012 Honors: Cornelia Oberlander earns the ASLA Medal, PWP Landscape Architecture wins the Firm Award -- Peter Walker; Herrick Smith; Mary Hughes; Chesapeake Bay Foundation; Earl Blumenauer; Design Workshop's Design Week; ASLA Potomac Chapter/ACE Mentor Program [links to images, info]- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Campus Collective: Leers Weinzapfel Associates Rethinks Higher Education Design: Addressing the interconnectivity of campus environs and student experience. By John Gendall- ArchNewsNow

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